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ABSTRACT

This study examined authoritative and authoritarian parenting and specific parenting practices among Chinese mothers with preschoolers. The final sample consisted of 463 mothers with their 3 to 7 year-olds from 11 preschools, in Taiwan. Mothers completed a Chinese translation of the Parenting Behavior Questionnaire that assessed their parenting practices. Findings indicated that the subscales of the Authoritative scale were positively related to each other. Subscales of the Authoritarian scale were also positively related to each other. The Authoritarian and Authoritative total scores were negatively related to each other. The majority of the mothers (over 65 percent) could be classified as authoritative. None of the mothers in this sample were classified as authoritarian. Four parenting patterns were identified for the sample: (1) high authoritative, low authoritarian (65 percent of mothers); (2) high authoritative, medium authoritarian (12 percent); (3) medium authoritative, low authoritarian (15 percent); and (4) medium authoritative, medium authoritarian (7 percent). Contrary to the impression from many previous cross-cultural studies presenting Chinese parents as controlling and authoritarian, the findings of this study showed that the authoritative pattern was predominant among participants. (Contains 22 references.) (KB)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine authoritative and authoritarian parenting in Chinese mothers with preschoolers. This study not only focused on the global parenting typologies (e.g., authoritative and authoritarian parenting), but also looked into the individual component elements of authoritative and authoritarian parenting. The sample consisted of 463 mothers with their preschool children in Taiwan. Mothers were administered a questionnaire which assessed their parenting practices. It was found that the majority of the mothers (over 65%) in this sample could be classified as authoritative mothers. None of the mothers in this sample were classified as authoritarian. Most previous cross-cultural studies have depicted Chinese parenting as "authoritarian," or "controlling," which has not been viewed as "optimal" parenting in western culture. This study found that although Chinese parents have been found to score higher on the authoritarian parenting measure than western parents, authoritative parenting was still commonly practiced among Chinese mothers. For those who practice authoritarian parenting, it was very unlikely to be in the extensive or punitive form, and the use of authoritarian parenting was often accompanied by the use of a medium to high degree of authoritative parenting.

Chinese Parenting Reconsideration: Parenting Practices in Taiwan

The importance of studying parenting behavior has long been recognized. For young children, parents are very important socialization agents. Parenting practices have a significant influence on child development. With respect to parenting practices, Baumrind's (1967, 1971, 1991) three major types or patterns of child rearing are broadly studied. The three major parenting typologies are authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Authoritative parents are warm, loving, responsive and supportive. They respect their children's independence, personality characteristics, point of view, interests, and motives; they communicate well with their children, encourage give and take in discussions, and are clear about the reasons for directives. In contrast, authoritarian parents are highly controlling, rely heavily on punitive discipline, and provide relatively little warmth. Finally, permissive parents are nurturant, but lax in disciplining and rewarding their children.

Quite a few cross-cultural studies have been done to compare parenting practices among different cultural groups. In some studies, Chinese parents have been found to score higher on "restrictive," "controlling," or "authoritarian" parenting measures than western parents (Chiu, 1987; Kelley & Tseng, 1992; Lin & Fu, 1990). Based on the findings reported above, Chinese parenting was often depicted as "restrictive," "controlling," or "authoritarian." The child development literature conducted in western countries has often claimed that such parenting is not optimal for children's development. Authoritarian parenting was associated with rejected children and children with lower grades in school. In contrast, children from authoritative families were found to be instrumentally competent and had better school performance (Baumrind, 1991; Dekovic' & Janssens, 1992; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Hein &

Lewko, 1994). However, studies of the relations between parenting practices and child outcomes in a sample of Chinese parents are not consistent with that found in the western literature. Parental control or authoritarian parenting was found to be positively related to the child's socially competent behavior, autonomy, self-esteem, and self-control (Chen, 1997; Chung, 1994; Xu, Wan, Mussen, Shen, Li, & Cao, 1991). Moreover, though Chinese parents were found to score higher on "controlling" or "authoritarian" measures than western parents, Chinese children were found to have superior school performance (Dornbusch et al., 1987).

Researchers have tried to solve the paradox regarding Chinese restrictive parenting practices and Chinese children's outcomes. For example, it has been proposed that the parental influences are not appropriate predictors of school performance for Asian children (Dornbusch et al., 1987), or the parenting concepts "authoritarian" and "restrictive" are not very relevant to Asians, and the labels may not be generalizable across cultures (Chao, 1994; Chen, 1997; Chung, 1994; Gorman, 1998). It was argued that these concepts may have different meanings for Americans and Chinese. While for Americans, "strictness" is sometimes equated with manifestations of parental hostility, aggression, mistrust, and dominance, for Asians, parental strictness may be the reflection of parental concern, caring, or involvement (Chao, 1994; Gorman, 1998; Kim & Chun, 1994; Rohner & Pettengill, 1985).

Most studies in the area have compared parents from two or more cultural groups and focused on differences between the groups. In cross-cultural studies, the group with which Chinese were compared was often Euro-Americans. Intracultural variation has not been directly studied in previous cross-cultural research. It should be noted that though Chinese parents "overall" scored higher on authoritarian parenting than American parents, it did not mean that Chinese would use authoritarian parenting extensively or exclusively. Chinese parents did not

necessarily score lower on the authoritative parenting related measures, either. For example, in Lin and Fu's study (1990), no difference was found on open expression of affection between Chinese and Caucasian-American parents. In Chao's study (1994), Chinese mothers' and European-American mothers' scores on the authoritative scale did not differ. In the use of reasoning strategy, there was no difference found between Chinese and Caucasian American mothers (Kelley & Tseng, 1992). In an earlier study (Chiu, 1987), Chinese mothers were found to be more democratic than the Anglo-American mothers. Chiu also indicated that, while the Chinese mothers were more restrictive and controlling than the Anglo-American mothers, they were not more likely to approve of the expression of hostility or rejection toward the child. These findings all suggested that, while the Chinese parents may have higher scores on "restrictive," "controlling" or "authoritarian" measures than their American counterparts, they do not necessarily have lower scores on the "authoritative" measure, component elements of the authoritative measure (e.g., reasoning, democratic attitudes), or have higher scores on a particular component element of the authoritarian measure (e.g., hostility or rejection). Therefore, "authoritarian" is an incomplete, or even misleading, characterization of Chinese parenting. As Chao (1992) has pointed out, to describe Chinese parenting as restrictive or authoritarian would be missing other aspects that are actually at least as descriptive of the Chinese.

In studies examining the relations between parenting practices and child outcomes, single parental variables (e.g., restrictiveness) have often been investigated independently. However, in naturally occurring parenting practices, different aspects of parenting occur simultaneously, not independently. Researchers who examine the influence of a single parental variable would be unable to detect the combined influence of two or more parental behaviors (e.g., warmth and control). Combinations or patterns of child rearing techniques tend to be better predictors of

children's outcomes than individual practices. Some studies have used several parent behavior variables in nonorthogonal combinations (e.g., authoritarian and authoritative) to assess parenting. However, because authoritative and authoritarian parenting types have been identified by Baumrind as two of the three main parenting typologies, authoritative and authoritarian parenting tended to be dichotomized into two opposing types. It is often assumed that if a parent is identified as authoritarian, he or she cannot be authoritative at the same time. Therefore, the score on one measure is often discussed without considering the score on the other measure. There are many parents who could not be classified as "purely" authoritative or "purely" authoritarian. Parents may have a higher score on one measure, for example, the authoritarian measure, but their scores on the authoritative measure should also be considered. Moreover, a paradox has been identified in explaining Chinese "restrictive" parenting styles and Chinese children's outcomes, especially in explaining their superior school performance. A hypothesis could be made that Chinese parents might exercise some aspects of authoritarian parenting practices while some aspects of authoritative behaviors are still present. The authoritative parenting practices may offset any negative consequences of authoritarian parenting practices. Moreover, the meaning and effect of parental control and strictness would differ when embedded in an atmosphere of parental warmth and involvement versus parental hostility and rejection. It is suggested that Chinese children's outcomes depend jointly on their parents' use of authoritarian parenting and their use of authoritative parenting.

In response to the limitations of the previous studies in this area, this study was designed to examine authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices in Chinese mothers with preschool children. First, this study examined the use of authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices

in contemporary Chinese mothers by going beyond simple comparisons of one group versus another and focusing on within-group differences. Variations in parenting practices within Chinese mothers were investigated. Chinese parenting patterns were identified based on the mother's scores on both authoritative and the authoritarian parenting measures. Not only were the mother's scores on the authoritative and authoritarian parenting taken into account simultaneously, the mother's scores on the specific factors within each global parenting typology were also investigated. Going beyond the global parenting typologies and looking into the different components of each of these parenting practices should contribute to a better understanding of Chinese parenting.

Method

Sample

About 1,100 mothers with children who were enrolled in preschools in the city of Taipei were the sample for this study. A list of preschools from four regions of Taipei were randomly sampled. Twelve preschools were selected. Eleven of them were successfully contacted and agreed to participate in the study. Next, all families from the selected preschools were invited to participate. The final sample for data analyses includes 463 mothers with 3- to 7- year-old children. The majority of the mothers had a high school (41%) or college education (47%), with an average income level of 4.3 on the seven level income scale. In American dollars, the average monthly family income for this sample was about $3,200, or $ 38,400 annually. Most of the mothers were in their 30s and 98% of them were married. On average, they had 2.02 children, with a range from 1 to 4.

Measures

The Parenting Behavior Questionnaire (PBQ) (Robinson, Hart, Mandleco, & Olsen, 1996)

was used to assess the mother's use of authoritative and authoritarian parenting. Given the fact that the primary interest of the study was on the issue of the "optimal," "authoritative" parenting in western countries vs. the "traditional," "authoritarian" parenting in Chinese societies, permissive parenting was not examined in the present study. This measure was designed to overcome limitations of other widely used measures for assessing parenting (see Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart's review, 1995). The items were constructed based on conceptualizations of authoritative and authoritarian typologies drawn from the current literature that appeared to have face validity. It is a measure with a reasonable number of items and reliabilities. The version used in this study was especially designed for parents of preschool children. One reason in particular why this instrument was selected for this study was that in addition to measuring the global parenting typologies (e.g., authoritative and authoritarian), the specific parenting practices that occur within each typology could also be examined separately. It may be that Chinese mothers score high on some aspects of parenting viewed as authoritarian by western researchers, but may score low on others.

With this measure, the parent is asked to rate how often she exhibits the behavior with her child on a 5-point scale from (1) never to (5) always. The Authoritative scale consists of 27 items with a Cronbach alpha of .91 (with four subscales: Warmth and Involvement, Reasoning/Induction, Democratic participation, and Good natured/ Easy going). The Authoritarian scale consists of 20 items with a Cronbach alpha of .75 (with four subscales: Verbal hostility, Corporal punishment, Nonreasoning/Punitive strategies, and Directiveness). The item scores were summed to produce an Authoritative total score with four subscale scores, and an Authoritarian total score with four subscale scores.

Slight modifications of the Authoritarian subscales were made for this study based on a

reliability analysis. Three items were excluded from the measures to obtain reasonable reliabilities for this sample. The item "I tell my child what to do" was deleted from the "Directiveness" subscale and thus increased the alpha from .57 to .64. The items "I appear to be more concerned with own feelings than with my child's feelings" and "When two children are fighting, I discipline my child first and ask questions later" were deleted from the "Non-reasoning/Punitive strategies" subscale and the alpha increased from .48 to .61. The alpha for the "Corporal punishment" subscale for this sample was .77, and the alpha for the "Verbal hostility" subscale was .64. Fifteen items remained in Authoritarian scale and the alpha for the total scale for this sample was .84. Alphas for the Authoritative scale and its subscales for this sample were similar to the alphas reported by those who developed the instrument. For this sample, the alpha for the total Authoritative scale was .90; the alpha for the Warmth/Involvement subscale was .77; the alpha for the Reasoning/Induction subscale was .80; the alpha for the Democratic participation subscale was .65; the alpha for the Good natured/easy-going subscale was .68.

Procedure

The instrument was translated into Chinese, and then translated back into English by another person. A third person was consulted to resolve any disagreement between the back translation of the items and the original items. The back translation method was employed for the purpose of validating the accuracy of the translation.

The translated version of the questionnaire along with a letter describing the study were distributed to students in the randomly selected Taiwan preschools, who took the questionnaires home for their mothers to fill out. The mothers were asked to return the questionnaires to the preschool. A reminder letter, which was originally planned to increase the return rate, was not

sent out. Most preschool directors and teachers indicated that the reminder letter would not help much, but would burden the teachers with extra work. To avoid creating resentment and a lack of cooperation among the preschool directors and teachers, a gift certificate drawing was used to encourage participation by the parents; this incentive was suggested by the preschool directors and teachers. Over 47 % of the mothers completed and returned the questionnaire. Five hundred and ten questionnaires were returned. A total of 463 questionnaires were usable for analysis. Most of the unused questionnaires (47 questionnaires) were ones that only had the odd-numbered pages filled out on the double-sided form.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the parenting variables

On the parenting practices measures, mothers had mean scores ranging from 3.6 to 4.1 on the 5-point scale for the four authoritative subscales, and mean scores ranging from 1.7 to 2.2 for the four authoritarian subscales, indicating a generally high level of authoritative parenting and low level of authoritarian parenting across all the mothers.

Chinese parenting patterns

Chinese parenting patterns were categorized based on the mother's scores on the Authoritative scale, Authoritarian scale, and their subscales. Correlations among the mother's scores on the Authoritative and Authoritarian subscales were examined first.

Correlations among the component elements of Authoritative and Authoritarian scales

The correlational analysis showed that all four subscales of the Authoritative scale (Warmth/Involvement, Reasoning/Induction, Democratic participation, and Good natured/Easy going) were positively related to each other. Subscales of the Authoritarian scale (Directiveness, Corporal punishment, Non-reasoning/Punitive strategies, and Verbal hostility) were also

significantly related to each other in the positive direction. Regarding the relation between the Authoritative and the Authoritarian scales, the Authoritative total scale and the Authoritarian total scale scores were negatively related to each other ($r = -.38$, $p<.001$). All subscales of the Authoritative scale were also negatively related to subscales of Authoritarian scale at the $p<.001$ level (See Table 1). Mothers who practiced one aspect of authoritative parenting, were more likely to practice other aspects of authoritative parenting, and were less likely to practice all aspects of authoritarian parenting. Similarly, mothers who practiced one aspect of authoritarian parenting were more likely to practice all other aspects of authoritarian parenting, and less likely to practice authoritative parenting in all aspects. Based on this analysis, the patterns of Chinese parenting did not seem to depart from the parenting patterns found in western studies.

Table 1 about here

Categorization of Chinese parenting patterns

Cluster analyses were done based on the mother's scores on the eight parenting subscales. The Quick Cluster method was used with 3- and 4- cluster solutions. The results indicated that the mother's scores on the subscales of the Authoritative and Authoritarian scales did not further differentiate Chinese parenting patterns than the scores on the global parenting measures (i.e., Authoritative total scale and Authoritarian total scale) did. For example, in a 4-cluster solution, mothers who were classified into cluster 1 had the highest scores across the four Authoritative subscales; mothers in cluster 2 had the second highest scores across the four Authoritative subscales; mothers in cluster 3 had the third highest scores across the four Authoritative subscales; mothers in cluster 4 had the lowest scores across the four Authoritative subscales. The

same pattern also applied to the scores across the Authoritarian subscales. The finding suggested that, for categorizing Chinese parenting patterns, looking into the component elements of the scales added little useful information beyond that provided by the Authoritative and Authoritarian total scores. Therefore, a decision was made to perform the categorization analysis based on the Authoritative and Authoritarian total scores.

First, mothers were classified as "low," "medium," and "high," based on their mean scores on the Authoritative and Authoritarian total scales. The 5-point scales were divided into three equal parts to create the groups. Mothers with mean scores between 1 and 2.3 were classified as "low," above 2.3 through 3.6 as "medium," above 3.6 through 5 as "high." Instead of forcing mothers into "low," "medium," or "high" groups, based on their scores relative to others in the sample (for example, categorizing those in the top one-third for this sample as the "high" group), this method detected where the mothers' parenting scores really stood on the 5-point scale and did not depend upon the distribution of scores in this particular sample. The advantage of this classification method is that it prevents us from classifying someone as being "low" on an outcome because her score is in the lowest third of the distribution, even though her mean score may be fairly high on the 5-point scale (i.e., indicating that she uses the parenting behavior frequently). Similarly, we did not classify someone as being in the "high" group just because she was in the top third of the distribution, when her mean score (e.g., 2 on a 5-point scale) would indicate that she rarely used a behavior.

After the classification, no mother in this sample fell into the "high Authoritarian" category. Only 2 mothers were in the "low authoritative " category; thus, they were excluded from the analysis. Therefore, four parenting patterns were identified for this sample-- "high authoritative, low authoritarian," "high authoritative, medium authoritarian," "medium

authoritative, low authoritarian," and "medium authoritative, medium authoritarian." Over 65% of the mothers fell into "high authoritative, low authoritarian" group, 15% of the mothers were in the "medium authoritative, low authoritarian"group, 12% in the "high authoritative, medium authoritarian" group," and 7% in the "medium authoritative, medium authoritarian" group (See Table 2).

Table 2 about here

Mothers' scores on the subscales of the Authoritative and the Authoritarian scales were also classified as "low," "medium," and "high," based on the criteria described above. For the Authoritative subscales, 80% of the mothers were high in Warmth/Involvement, and 20% were medium. No one in this study fell in the low group for this factor. For the Reasoning/Induction subscales, 73% were high, 26% were medium, and only 1% were low. For Democratic participation, 55% of the mothers were in the high group, and 45% were in the medium group. Seventy-one percent of the mothers were high on the Good natured/easy-going factor, 28% were medium, and 1% were low. For the Authoritarian subscales, mothers in low Directiveness group were 57%, and mothers in medium Directiveness group were 42%. Seventy-eight percent of mothers were low in corporal punishment, 21% were medium, and 1% were high. Most mothers (92%) in this sample were low in Non-reasoning/Punitive strategies. Seventy-nine percent of mothers were low in Verbal hostility, 20% were medium, and less than 1% were high.

It was noticed that the majority of the mothers, over 70%, were high in most of the authoritative factors and low in most of the authoritarian factors. The exceptions involved Democratic participation and Directiveness. Mothers varied more widely in their scores on these

two subscales. Approximately 56% of the mothers were high in Democratic participation, and or low in Directiveness, while approximately 46% of the mothers practiced Democratic participation and Directiveness parenting at medium level.

Discussion

Contrary to the impression from many previous cross-cultural studies which seem to present Chinese as relatively "controlling" and "authoritarian," the results of this study showed that the authoritative parenting pattern was predominant among participants. Over 65% of Chinese mothers were highly authoritative and low in authoritarian parenting. None of the mother in this sample met the criteria for high authoritarian parenting practices. There were approximately 20% of the mothers who scored in the medium range for authoritarian parenting. However, it should be noted that the use of authoritarian parenting was accompanied by medium to high scores on the authoritative parenting measure. Moreover, there were also about 15% of the mothers who were medium on the authoritative and low on the authoritarian parenting measures. The correlational analysis in this study indicated that mothers who were more likely to practice authoritarian parenting were less likely to practice authoritative parenting. The categorizational analysis provides a clearer picture of Chinese parenting by going beyond examining the scores linearly. It showed that the use of authoritative and authoritarian parenting, though negatively correlated, were not necessarily independent from each other. Some Chinese mothers practice authoritarian parenting at a medium level, and also practice authoritative parenting at a medium to high level.

If a "purely" authoritative or authoritarian parenting style was defined by having scores that were high on one measure and low on the other, 65% of the Chinese mothers in this sample would be identified as "purely" authoritative. No one was in the "purely" authoritarian group.

Thirty-five percent of the mothers in this sample could not be simply described as "authoritative" or "authoritarian." The results support the argument that depicting Chinese as "authoritarian" based on their higher "authoritarian" scores relative to western samples, is not only misleading, but also an over simplification.

In regard to the subscales of the parenting measures, as noted in the result section, over 70% of the mothers were classified as "high" in most of the authoritative subscales, and "low" in most of the authoritarian subscales. The exceptions were the Democratic participation and the Directiveness subscales; scores on these subscales varied more widely among the mothers. Fifty-five percent of the mothers were high on Democratic participation, and 45% were medium. Fifty-seven percent of the mothers were low on the Directiveness subscales, and 42% were medium. In addition, most mothers in the sample (92%) hardly used non-reasoning, punitive discipline strategies. It is suggested that, although Chinese parents often have higher scores on the authoritarian measures than Euro-American parents, it may be due to their use of directive discipline strategies (being demanding, and scolding children when they violate rules), and not because they are punitive. Instead of using non-reasoning, punitive strategies (e.g., punishing children with no explanation or justification), Chinese parents are more likely to use directive discipline strategies to let children know clearly what was expected from them. Non-reasoning, punitive strategies seem to be more focused on the behavior which was <u>not</u> desired, while directive discipline strategies are more likely to emphasize the need for improvement, or even to demand that the child do what is considered desirable or appropriate. Moreover, the results indicated that a certain percentage of Chinese mothers may not highly encourage democratic participation in the family, but again, they were very unlikely to be punitive toward their children. Baumrind (1971) has identified several subpatterns of parental socialization. There are two

authoritarian subpatterns: one involves parents who are rejecting or indifferent, while the other involves parents who do not encourage independence and individuality but are not rejecting. This study suggested that Chinese's use of authoritarian parenting is very likely to be similar to the latter subpattern identified by Baumrind. However, the independence that Chinese parents do not particularly encourage is family independence; individual independence is not necessarily discouraged (Chen & Uttal, 1988; Lin & Fu, 1990).

Quite a few studies provide support for the distinction between family interdependence and individual interdependence. Lin and Fu (1990) found that both Chinese in Taiwan and immigrant Chinese-American parents tended to have higher ratings on encouragement of independence than did Caucasian-American parents. In explaining the unexpected finding, they suggested that although the Chinese emphasize family interdependence, children are also encouraged to be independent outside the family to fulfill personal goals and to adjust to the changing demand of the society. Kagitcibasi (1989) studied socialization values in Taiwan. The author found that being obedient to parents and being independent and self-reliant both were viewed as desirable traits by parents in Taiwan. Xu and the colleague (1991) invited a panel of Chinese psychologists to select family socialization dimensions and children's characteristics which were most critical and desirable in contemporary Chinese culture. It was found that for family socialization dimensions, parameters such as democracy in making family decisions, which are usually investigated in American studies, were not included. However, independence was included as one of the most desirable child characteristics. In the present study, the results showed that approximately 70% to 80% of the mothers would practice authoritative parenting (warmth/involvement, reasoning/induction, and having good natured/easy-going interaction with their children) extensively, but only 55% of the mothers would practice extensive democratic

participation with their children. It seems that when making family rules is involved, independent thinking and individuality, which may challenge parental authority, are not particularly encouraged.

The results of this study revealed that the majority of the mothers in this sample were highly authoritative and rarely practiced authoritarian parenting. For those who practiced authoritarian parenting, the use of the authoritarian discipline was at "medium" level, and was often accompanied by the use of authoritative parenting at a medium to high level. As Chung (1994) pointed out, parental control, strict discipline, and children's obedience may not represent the same inflexibility and rigidness in Taiwan as they do in American studies. It may be that Chinese parents would typically use authoritative parenting, and would use authoritarian discipline techniques when the authoritative discipline does not work and parental authority is challenged. Stevenson, Chen, and Lee (1992) also reported that in response to young children's wrong doings, Chinese parents often try to discuss and explain misbehavior with their children. However, if they continue the negative behaviors, direct forms of discipline, such as threats of punishment or actual use of physical punishment, would be used. To these parents, the use of authoritarian parenting was well-intentioned, rather than punitive. To the children, the parents' use of authoritative parenting makes them emotionally secure, and more receptive to their parents' occasional use of authoritarian discipline. However, it should be noted that there was not extreme use of authoritarian parenting found in this sample. While it is suggested that, for Chinese, the use of authoritarian parenting is very likely to be out of concern and love, and is often accompanied by the use of authoritative parenting, it may not apply to the case in which extensive authoritarian parenting is used.

In sum, this study found that authoritative parenting is a predominant parenting style

among contemporary Chinese mothers in Taiwan. It is suggested that Chinese parents who practice authoritarian parenting when necessary could be very warm and caring. In this study, mothers who used verbal or physical punishment at moderate levels were likely to demonstrate characteristics of "authoritative" parenting at the same time. The use of authoritative parenting may play an important role in children by facilitating compliance and the acceptance of parental control. Instead of raising questions about using Baumrind's typologies (i.e., authoritative and authoritarian) to assess Chinese parenting, this study suggests that Chinese parents' scores on the authoritative and the authoritarian measures should be considered simultaneously. The degree of their use of certain parenting practices should be taken into account, too. Having relatively higher scores on the authoritarian measure than Euro-American parents does not mean that Chinese parents use authoritarian parenting extensively, or that they do not practice authoritative parenting at all. The effect of authoritarian parenting on children's development is likely to be different if parents also use authoritative methods to guide their children.

This study does not intend to generalize the results to parents in rural areas of Taiwan, or Chinese parents outside of Taiwan. Future investigations should address some of this study's limitations by including both urban and rural Chinese mothers with a wider SES range, as these limitations of the sample could well have affected the findings of the current investigation. This study could also contribute to future studies which try to explain the paradox involving Chinese parenting and the academic success of Chinese children. Though Chinese parents have been found to score higher on "authoritarian" measures than western parents, future studies should ask the following questions. First, how high is the score? Do most Chinese parents practice authoritarian parenting extensively or are their scores in the "medium" range? Second, to what degree is the Chinese parents' use of authoritarian parenting accompanied by medium to high

levels of authoritative parenting? There is a high percentage of parents who do not simply practice "purely" authoritative or "purely" authoritarian parenting. Thus, "authoritarian" parenting by itself is not likely to explain the relation between parenting and chid outcomes. Moreover, in comparisons of Chinese and American parenting, the component elements of the authoritative and authoritarian parenting measures should be examined to detect the specific differences in parenting between the two cultures. Are Chinese parents' higher scores mainly due to the use of directive discipline techniques (e.g., being demanding, scolding children when they violate rules), or other "punitive" discipline strategies? This study suggested that Chinese parents' higher scores on the authoritarian measure may be largely due to the use of "directive" techniques, and are less likely due to the use of punitive discipline strategies.

The present study should be viewed as a first step toward greater understanding of parenting practices within the Chinese population. It should be noted that in this study there is no intention of making judgements about what is a "good" parenting style for Chinese parents. Further studies should be done examining the relations between different parenting styles and child outcomes. For future studies related to explaining Chinese children's outcome and parenting, it is suggested that the joint influences of Chinese parents' use of authoritative and authoritarian parenting should be considered.

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Table 1

Correlations among the subscales of the authoritative and authoritarian measures.

(N=463)

	A: Authoritative Scale				B: Authoritarian Scale			
	A1	A2	A3	A4	B1	B2	B3	B4
A1								
A2	.63**							
A3	.56**	.64**						
A4	. 66**	.68**	.58**					
B1	-.27**	-.10*	-.16**	-.33**				
B2	-.29**	-.17**	-.18**	-.36**	.45**			
B3	-.34**	-.26**	-.26**	-.41**	.48**	.41**		
B4	-.18**	-.17**	-.17**	-.40**	.53**	.49**	.42**	

A: Authoritative subscales

A1: Warmth/Involvement

A2: Reasoning/Induction

A3: Democratic participation

A4: Good natured/Easy going

B: Authoritarian subscales

B1: Directiveness

B2: Corporal punishment

B3: Non-reasoning/Punitive strategies

B4: Verbal hostility

** p <.001

*P< .05

Table 2.

Four parenting patterns for Chinese mothers

		Authoritative
	Medium	High
Authoritarian		
Low	N=69 (15%)	N=295 (65%)
Medium	N=31 (7%)	N=55 (12%)